

**METHOD, SYSTEM, APPARATUS AND
PROGRAM PRODUCT FOR DISTRIBUTION AND
INSTANTIATION OF SOFTWARE UPGRADES**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

- 5 ^{is a continuation and} This application claims priority under 35 USC §120 and/or §365 to PCT International Application Serial No. PCT/US99/04581 filed March 3, 1999, which in turn claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/076,667 filed March 3, 1998, each of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

- 10 This invention relates to a system, method, and program product for providing software updates online. The updates may be provided to one or more of a sequence of individual computers, or to a network of computers. In a preferred exemplification, the software updates are provided to individual clients in a client server-network, for example a client-server network of the type executing a partially replicated relational
15 database or transaction processing system, an enterprise on a WAN or a LAN.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

- Business enterprises utilize large numbers of terminals, i.e., desktop computers, portable computers, and network terminals to carry out their activities. While it is desirable that all of these terminals have identical images, interfaces, and software,
20 this is not always possible when a continuum of terminal ages and capabilities exists in an enterprise. However, it is absolutely essential that the set of terminals in an enterprise be able to communicate effectively. This requires careful planning for and coordination of software migration efforts.

- In a system including one or more central databases (including correspondence
25 databases and such databases as are contemplated in groupware applications such as Lotus Notes. Novell GroupWise, and the like) and locally partially replicated databases, there is considerable amount of software which is often customized to meet the needs of particular enterprise, and even particular users and groups of users within elements of the enterprise. A great deal of effort is expended on configuring the
30 software and writing custom modules and objects. If the software is upgraded to a